

**From:** Gene Coussens  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

I volunteer at a high school where I am trying to keep 30 computers running for the students. My experience with MicroSoft (MS) has been extremely difficult and at times I could not run the required software.

Security of software: MS has no protection against students changing the operating system and application programs unless you purchase the professional version which is extremely hard to maintain.

Using another operating system (Linux) the task would be trivial and the software would be secure.

Since MS has a monopoly, the application software is only available to run under the MS operating system.

Cost: MS requires licenses for each machine, for a connection to a server, a server license, and licenses for each application that is contained in a computer. The system is designed to maximize the number of licenses because you cannot run an application on the server (central computer) and get the results on the client (the users computer). Each machine must be a full system, on other operating systems one can run applications on the server and view the results on a stripped down machine in front of the user. All of the software for the other system is FREE. Each computer in our school has more than \$150 worth of licenses again because MS has a monopoly and prevents software vendors from offering the same material on other operating systems. Because MS updates their software every two years we spend about \$75 per machine each year, we call this the MS tax. If vendors try to offer their software on other operating systems MS will not license their application on the MS system.

Ease of Maintenance: MS has been patching together an operating system based on a poorly designed core of software which has been updated every two years. Some application software will run only on some versions of the operating system and not on others. This makes a tangle of application software and different versions of the operating system on different machines. Keeping track of which program is where is very time consuming. On other operating systems there is a slow evolutionary migration of the software which does not require frequent updates and the system appears almost seamless and it is quite stable.

XP Version of Office: MS has changed the licensing method and cost for the new version of Windows.

Instead of bulk licensing for schools they now require that we keep track of each license separately. A machine description and the individual license assigned to that machine is registered with MS and we are not allowed to change parts of the computer without contacting MS

for a reactivation of the license. This is method of forcing us to get permission to change configuration on our own computers is draconian in nature and we will do without rather than submit to these conditions.

The settlement that is proposed does nothing to prevent the company from proceeding with these practices. Far from preventing abuse this settlement says that the company is correct and is free to find even more ways to fleece the public.

The settlement that the remaining litigants are proposing is a far better agreement for protecting the public. In essence the MS operating system is now a standard imposed upon the industry and should be treated as such rather than the private domain of one company. The settlement proposed by the remaining states creates fair and open standards that will allow the application software companies to write software for the other operating systems, we can then give the end customer some choice in which system is best for their application.

Respectively,

Eugene Coussens  
retired Engineer, Hewlett Packard.